Episcopal Government

AND THE

HONOUR

Of the present

BISHOPS

Proved necessary to be maintained:

IN A

Modest and Seasonable Address

TO THE

CITIZENS

OF

LONDON.

By a zealous Lover of the *Protestant Religion*,
And a hearty Friend to the City of *London*.

DUBLIN,

Reprinted M. DC. LXXIX.

EPISCOPAL GOVERNMENT &c.

Worthy Sirs,

THE Providence of God having ſo wonderfully interpoſed, and by ſuch degrees and ſteps ſo wiſely diſplayed it ſelf in the diſcovery of thoſe dark and deep contrivances of our reſtleſs Advarſaries, againſt the true Peace, Happineſs, Religion of this Nation; I think therefore we all of us are bound to do nothing that may provoke this good God againſt us, nor yet that may ſtrengthen our Enemies hands that are ſo ready to be liſt up to our deſtruction, and whatſoever it is that may ſecure us from the machinations or aſſaults of *Rome*, I think, ought to be eſteemed and honoured by us. And therefore I cannot but wonder at one thing, which I find too common both in City and Country; and that is a very great forwardneſs to undermine the Credit, and blaſt the Reputation of the preſent Biſhops. You can ſcarce ſtep into any great Companies of men, but one or other is venting his diſpleaſure againſt thoſe Reverend perſons; and one ſtory or other, whereby either their perſons or their Functions are ſtruck at, muſt help to make the Diſcourſes of publick Houſes pleaſant and entertaining.

Now what ſhould be the meaning of all this, I cannot tell, unleſs too many are led by the Jeſuits ſtill, who would make you believe they are fartheſt from them. For certainly nothing can make way ſooner for thoſe Sons of Cruelty and Slaughter, and for that Church, whoſe Garments have been ſo often died in the blood of Chriſtians than the ruine of this Church which we have by Law eſtabliſhed; and nothing can work that ruine ſooner than either taking away the Order of Biſhops, or elſe by diſhonourable and unworthy reflections rendring them uſeleſs. Do but accompliſh this once, and you have done that work your ſelves, which the Sophiſters of *St. Omers* for many years have been Plotting and endeavouring. This is ſo very plain to all wiſe men, that *I* wonder any man that inſinuates into the minds of others little opinions and thoughts of the Biſhops, is not afraid of being ſeized upon as a *Romiſh* Prieſt, and bound over to the Seſſions, till he hath given ample ſatisfaction to the Miniſters of Government that he is an honeſt Proteſtant, and not a crafty Brother. And he that conſiders the ways whereby the confuſions of the laſt times were uſhered on, and by what Inſtruments thoſe diſtractions were continued, he will not want many Arguments to perſuade him, that thoſe perſons, let them be who they will, that at this time endeavour to deſtroy the Government of the Church, are enemies to the Proteſtant Religion; & under the maſk and diſguiſe of big and glittering pretences for the Kingdom of the Lord Jeſus, are opening the doors for ſwarms of *Romiſh* Emiſſaries to come in.

And therefore that I may offer my little mite to the Corban, and according to my ſmall ability contribute towards the peace of the Nation, and the continuance of our excellent Religion amongſt us, I have made bold to addreſs my ſelf to you, worthy Citizens, as perſons whoſe Example and Carriage very much influence the whole Kingdom, and to beg of you, if you have any honour for that Religion you ſeem ſo zealous for, that you would brow-beat and diſcountenance all thoſe ſecret whiſperings againſt the Biſhops; and though there may be ſome failures in them, as what man lives without? or ſome miſtakes in their Judgments, and who is ſo perfect as to be free from them? yet to conſider that it is directly contrary to the ſafety of the Nation, to aggravate their faults, to leſſen their Authority, or to vilifie their perſons; and you

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cannot gratifie our Enemies more, nor give them greater occasions of rejoicing, nor better hopes of succeeding in their black designes, than by so doing.

And if you should ask me, upon what account I trouble you with this *Scribble*, and what Reasons I can give for my Assertion, and upon what score I am my self so tender, and would have You all too, of the Honour and Reputation both of the Order of Episcopacy and the persons of the Bishops themselves? I answer in these particulars.

First, it is very apparent to any man that considers well, that the Protestant Religion is concerned in the present Honour and Reputation of the Bishops, and in keeping up such an Order of men. And had *I* no other Reason to convince me of this, than the constant endeavours of the *Romanists* to overthrow this Government, I think it would be sufficient. For if the several informations we receive from those, who have been instruments to carry on the wicked Plots of this restless people, be true, & which they give upon their return into the Bosome of our Church, then am I sure the main Engine whereby they hope to compass their ends, is by the subversion of the Church-Government, as it is established by Law. And what hands they had in the disturbances of the last unnatural War, in order to this very thing, he must be very careless in his observations, that is not acquainted with. And therfore for Protestants at this time to insinuate any thing of like nature, certainly argues more zeal than Judgment, more anger and Revenge, than a studious pursuit of the Nations good.

But further 'tis worthy our more serious thoughts to consider that the present interest of our Religion lies in our Union with one another, and our strength lies in the wisest and greatest Body of the Nation. Now I would fain konw what conjunction of Forces can be expected from any other sort of men, in contradistinction to those who are members of that Church, whose Cause I am now defending. Alas, destroy but this once, and we find the greatest part of the other men abound with different sentiments even about those Principles upon which they ought to settle; and not twenty of them can agree together upon a Government, in which the rest of the Nation may be supposed to center; & consequently the common people, who have a great veneration for the Opinions of their several Teachers, upon whom they have set their affections & to whose conduct they have thrown their Judgments, zealously cry up what their Chiefs declare for, & plead the same dissatisfactions their Preachers do pretend to, when any thing is propounded not exactly agreeable to the little Models they have pitched upon as the onely *Patterns in the Mount*. And what can be hoped for in point of Settlement and Union upon such variety of Principles & pretences, but constant jarrings & animosities, bitter reflections upon each other, as Enemies to the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus, and proportionable endeavours to obstruct one another in any thing that looks like an Establishment?

And what must become of that Cause which our Forefathers purchased with their Blood and prayers at this rate? Alas, he that hath but half an eye may see. For when these breaches are made, and the Fence laid open, the Wild Boars of the Forest, and the greedy Foxes will have their full opportunity of devouring; for nothing in this juncture of time (as far as I can apprehend things) can keep them out, but conserving the Honour and Reputation of our Church, a Church made up of as wise and Learned men, considering the number, as any Church in *Europe*; and who have laboured both in Press and Pulpit, with as great strength of Arguments and zeal to defend their Mother against Encroachments and Usurpations of the Church of *Rome*, as any men in these Western parts of the World: and though there may be some scabbed and rot-

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ten sheep among them, idle and debauched persons that have crept into places of trust and charge, yet that is a thing ten times more easily curable than the repairing the loss of this Church can be by any other pretended Discipline whatsoever. And in short, if the Preferments of the Nation were better disposed of, and all Patrons would take that care their duties oblige them to, namely to present men more for Worth, and less for something else that might be named, I believe we should not have half the complaints of this kind, nor indeed, half the Reasons for them

Secondly, It is evident that those persons who endeavour to undermine the reputation of the Bishops and the being of the Church; by such private whispers and insinuations, are more acted by revenge and Sedition, than either true principles of Religion or else of Policy.

As for Religion, I am certain, truly weighed and rightly understood, it cannot be at the bottom of these wild undertakings, for what would men have in order to store their minds with the necessary principles of Religion, or in order to put themselves upon acting, according to the several obligations of it, that this Church doth not afford? All men agree that her Doctrines are sound, pure streams flowing from the unmuddied Fountain of holy Scriptures, and most agree that her Prayers are good and wholsom, and scarce to be quarrelled with upon any other account than that they are digested into Forms suitable to the several necessities of people meeting together in publick Assemblies. And as for her Ceremonies they are things in which the people are so little concerned, setting aside that of Kneeling at the Sacrament, that I wonder any person should leave our Church upon that account. And as Religion cannot be in this design, so am I sure Policy hath as little share in it, true and honest Policy whereby men do really pursue the peace and happiness of the Kingdom. Is it policy to weaken our own hands in order to strengthen those of our Butcher-like Enemies? Is it policy to pull down, before we know what to set up in the room thereof? nay, when others stand ready to take the advantage of the vacancy, in order to bring in their own abominable Idolatries and Superstitions? Is it policy to asperse and load with calumnies such men, with whose downfal the whole Order of the Priesthood is like to sink, in point of Esteem and Reputation amongst the common people; Is it policy to pursue the same methods, to use the same arts, by which in the memory of many of you, the Kingdom hath been once destroyed already? For Gods sake, Gentlemen, consider seriously, and remember that when you are put upon heats and passions against this Venerable Order, you are but Tools and Instruments to a company of designing people who expect the Spoil, and will give you the least share thereof; nay, of men, who when they have ruined the present Government of the Church must upon necessity fall with it themselves, because they are not an equal ballance to the Popish Interest considered in its members at home, and its Interest abroad. A Reflection which methinks should influence any man, who gives himself leisure to sit down, and impartially to debate things with cool and retired thoughts, and which I cannot doubt at all, will influence those worthy Patriots that now sit at the Helm, not to countenance any thing, but what indeed tends to a true Reformation, and a settling of us upon such a Basis as will be lasting to our Posterity for many Generations. And whatsoever men of Common wealth Principles may expect (for certainly these are the busie Agents against the Bishops at this time) yet so long as God blesses the King and present Parliament with a good understanding of one another, I shall never fear the encou-

couragement of any principles or actions that tend to ruine the Biſhops, or that Church they preſide in.

Thirdly, It is apparent that no other Church-Government is ſo ſuitable to the temper and Reaſon too, of the greateſt part of the people of *England*, conſidered as made up either of Gentry or Commonalty, and this notwithſtanding all the boaſts and pretences of men angry with the Government of the King and Church, I dare be bold to aſſert, and am ſure that I am not miſtaken in it; and truly I ſhould very much wonder it would be otherwiſe, conſidering what vaſt diſappointments they met withall from the Government of Presbytery, when it was ſet up, and how ſoon it became uneaſie to them, and with what rage and zeal they threw it off their ſhoulders upon the firſt opportunity. And I have obſerved that the greateſt part of thoſe people that are ſo forward to leſſen the Eſteem of Biſhops, yet generally declaim againſt this Government, as worſe, according as they phraſe it, than what they are at preſent under.

And as for Independency, not one perſon of an hundred, either knows what it is; or deſires to enter into it; and ſo for all other ſubordinate Sects. Where then muſt lie the Body of this people, either in point of ſubſtance or of Number? why certainly in the Church of *England*, and though I acknowledge a great many perſons wiſh ſome ſmall abatements and regulations, yet in the main they remonſtrate to any change of the Government, conſidered in its main and eſſential Conſtitution. The Nobility and Gentry (and that which gives a great advantage to this Church, thoſe of them that have made the greateſt improvement by their ſtudy and converſation) do moſt, I was going to ſay, almoſt all run this way; they underſtand ſo well the Antiquity of this Order, the neceſſity of it to keep people within their proper bounds, *&c.* that though they may now and then be diſpleaſed at ſome particular actions of men cloathed with this great and holy Character, yet by no means will give the leaſt aſſent to an alteration of the Government itſelf. They know very well that a conſiderable Revenue is neceſſary to keep up the Authority and Reſpect of theſe Reverend perſons in thoſe ſeveral places which are alotted to their Spiritual Government; and therefore I am confident, the Body of theſe great Worthies are ſo far from Robbing the Church of what is left, that for the good of the Nation, the honour of the Church, and encouragement of Religion and Learning, they ſtand ready and prepared to make all ſeaſonable additions. And ſo long as Learning, and generous and unmixt principles have any hearing in the world, I ſhall never doubt but thus it will be.

And as for the Commonalty, I am ſure we have, take the Nation in general, ten that come conſtantly without any diſſatisfaction or ſcruple to our *Pariſh*-Churches, to one that creeps into the corners of Separation; and if the people were not indulged in ſloth and negligence, by relaxing thoſe Laws that were made by our Fore-fathers in order to bring men to the publick and legally conſtituted Aſſemblies, I am certain we ſhould quickly find a difference betwixt the Numbers of a publick Congregation and a private *Meeting*; for the thinneſs our *Congregations* muſt be imputed to the common peoples, careleſneſs to attend the publick Solemnities and *Devotions*, and not to imbibed principles of Faction and Separation. And did legal preachers do their duty according to the obligations of *Conſcience*, of *Laws* and *Canons*, and civil *Magiſtrates* give good example, and command all within their Neighbourhood to wait upon *Chriſts* holy *Inſtitutions* according to thoſe Examples, we ſhould quickly find a change in things; and *Maſters* with the ſubordinate members of their *Families* flocking to our publick wor-

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ship as Doves to the Windows: I have now and then given my self the pleasure of travelling into many Countries of this Nation, and have always found, where there hath been a diligent Preacher, who hath joined prudence and sobriety of Life to his Doctrine, he hath never wanted respect for his Person, nor company at his Sermons. And I am confident, should either Presbytery or Independency be countenanced in the Nation, and brought into Parishes, not half the people would attend upon the Ministeries of such men, as they do now, where the Ordinances of God are administred by a true Son of the Church of *England*, whose conversation is strict, & labours constant. And I find in my Discourses with the greatest part of those, who seem inclinable to favour persons of a different stamp from those who have sworn to the Government, that their dissatisfactions are not founded in Principles, but in some other accidental things, which are too apt to govern all those whose education hath not given them the advantage of improving their Reason so far as to understand things that differ.

Fourthly, It is evident that those persons who now run from place to place to insinuate Jealousies and suspicions into the minds of people against this sacred Order of men, are either Sons of, or Relations to those, who had an hand in the distractions of the last Civil War; and upon that score are to be looked upon as persons carrying on a Design, and sacrificing the publick good to their own private malice or profit. Look through the City, and then walk into the Country abroad, and if you find not this true in the main, I dare venture the loss of whatsoever is dear to me. Yea, many of those themselves who sate upon the high places of the Earth, and possessed the Inheritances of the Bishops, are yet alive, hankering after, and longing for their former unjust plenty and abundance, and no doubt upon that account are very ready to propagate any story, to encourage any principle or undertaking, whereby these ends may be accomplished. Others of them are the Children of such, and cannot believe but that their Fathers Right and Title to those Lands were good, and that they themselves were wronged when they returned to their first and true Proprietors, (so vain and fond a Creature is man where his interest is concerned) and therefore they cast a lowring eye upon those brave Mansions, and desire nothing more than the opportunity of a second game, which certainly is half begun, when they have by idle tales and ridiculous stories rendred the Bishops useless and burthensome, and raised those animosities in the common peoples minds against them, which dispose them to use all indirect means and courses to pull them down, and to strip them of all those blessings which the piety of former Ages invested them withall.

Now such persons as these, Worthy Citizens, are not fit and proper for you to be governed by; it would be a great reflection upon your Wisdom as well as Piety, if you should permit those to command your Judgments, who in your own, or your Fathers memory, brought so great a scandal upon the Protestant Religion, by doing so vile and unworthy actions, under a pretence of exalting it. And I am not afraid to assert, that to hearken to the same suggestions whereby our late disturbances were begun and carried on to so great an height, is neither safe, nor yet religious, and though you may be taken with the glare and splendour of these insinuations at first sight, yet if you please to give your selves leave to look through them, you will find all imaginable reason to detest them, as things tending to a present ruine. For alack, these men are not sufficient either in point of Number, or in point of setled and well digested Principles, to steer the Ship of Government, but she must upon necessity be boarded by those whom at present we have no reason at all to trust, and the greatest reason to fear. And

And therefore if you would conſult the happineſs of the Nation, always hearken to the advice of wiſe and prudent perſons, men of intigrity and known honeſty, who pay reſpect to the Government out of conſcience & not deſign; and then you may be certain theſe ſubtile crafſtmen will fail in their ends, and find their expectations fruſtrated.

Laſtly, It is very evident the Biſhops do not deſerve theſe ſevere reflections that by ſome men are made upon them; and that thoſe who make them, take things either upon truſt, or are commanded by prejudice, or elſe, which is very hard, will not allow them the priviledge which every Commoner in *England* claims to himſelf, to wit, modeſtly and with Argument to contend for thoſe things which they in their judgments believe to be derived to them from many preceding Generations.

I have nothing to do to preſume to ſtate the late difference betwixt the Biſhops and the Honourable Houſe of Commons, my deſign is not to offend, but pray for all Collective Bodies of men, who are conſulting and endeavouring the Kingdom's welfare. And I do profeſs my ſelf contented with whatever they ſhall agree together for the Churches ſafety though it be by the Biſhops quitting any priviledge which they might have good ground to believe their Anceſtors did enjoy. All that I have to ſay (if ſome of theſe private whiſperers might have their will) theſe Learned men muſt not be allowed that Judgment of Diſcretion the Proteſtant Religion ſo highly and deſervedly contends for; but if preſently they comply not with things propoſed, a factious ſort of people muſt run up & down declaiming againſt them as Enemies to the Kingdom, as favourers of Popery, & the like. Now is not this very ſevere, as well as wicked? Is it any crime modeſtly to aſſert, and learnedly to argue for thoſe things they believe are entailed by Law and cuſtom upon them, and afterwards to ſubmit to the ſtrongeſt Reaſon, whether with them or againſt them. Certainly this is demonſtration that they are men of principles, & the more upon that account to be truſted with any conſultation, wherein the happineſs of the nation is concerned for is tamely & without any conſideration they ſhould reſolve themſelves into other mens Judgments, I do not doubt but theſe ſubtile Deſigners would readily on the other hand, ſcandalize them for their blind obedience, and expoſe them as a knot of perſons whoſe Judgments and Conſciences lie at the feet of their Intereſts; and that rather then loſe their ſtanding, they will ſwallow any thing though never ſo directly oppoſite to their ancient priviledges and immunities. But further, Theſe ſeveral ſtories that are taken up againſt them, and made uſe of in order to the leſſening them amongſt the common people, pray what is the ground of them but bare report? (as falſe and uncertain a thing as can be) and no ſooner is the pleaſant ſtory told, but away they run with it, and declare it with the ſame confidence, as if it was an Article of Faith. I have ſeen ſo much of this, that I cannot but wonder that any men that do but pretend to wiſdom, ſhould ſuffer themſelves to be ſo impoſed upon. I am ſure they will have better and ſtronger evidence before they will believe any thing at this rate againſt themſelves, or that party which they help to make up. But pray, worthy Citizens, is it prudence or honeſty in you to be drawn by ſuch ſlight artifices into a contempt of that Order of men, whoſe Right ſtands upon as good a bottom as the houſes you dwell in, or the Lands you poſſeſs, who have more to ſay for themſelves from Antiquity, than any government that was ever yet ſet up; and who are men uſually of great Learning and equal Piety. The Apoſtle teaches us a better Leſſon, when he adviſes not to receive an accuſation againſt an Elder under two or three witneſſes, and were more ſparing of our cenſures, till we had ſuch an evidence, I am ſure the Biſhops would be an Order of men as well beloved, and as ſeldom ſpoke evil of as any men in the kingdom.

And

And therfore for a concluſion, after I have begged you to believe, what I my ſelf am aſſured of, that this Paper flows from an heart full of Love and Honour for your ſelves and glorious City, I ſay let me intreat you all, as you have a deſire to keep the Proteſtant Religion amongſt you ſtill, as you would be ſo united that you may be able to reſiſt Foraign Forces, or lay inward Inſurrections, do not weaken your ſelves by ſuch courſes as theſe are: for confident I am, let men ſay what they will, and fanſie what times they pleaſe, if their beloved Models could once take place, that if the Government of the Church in its main and eſſential parts, as it now ſtands by Law eſtabliſhed, be once deſolated and ruined, England *would preſently turn to its antient ſlavery and bondage, and I fear the Popes Legates would come in amongſt us with more freedom than the wicked Jeſuits now run away with fear; and therefore, I beſeech you, bethink your ſelves in time (thoſe I mean, who are too apt to take bad impreſſion) and if any man in Coffe-houſes, or any other places of publick Concourſe load your ears with ſtories againſt the Biſhops, or their Government, ſuſpect him as a* Romiſh *Emiſſary, and reprove him as one who deſigns the Kingdoms and Churches ruine. I have no more to ſay, but wiſh this little Paper may be read without prejudice, and ſeriouſly reflected upon in your calm retirements; and then I do not doubt, but you will believe I am what I ſubſcribe my ſelf, A Paſſionate Lover of the Proteſtant Religion, a true and hearty Friend to the Citizens and City of* London, *and deſire to live no longer than I continue ſo.*

FINIS.